BATMAN
HANNIGAN & GIORDANO
BOY GEORGE
DAK
TITANS CREW
13TH BY
75¢
370
APR 84

BAT MAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE
WITH THE BATMAN UP IN MONTREAL, GOTHAM SURE IS BORING.
AFTER ALL, A GUY CAN STUDY THE BATCAVE'S CRIME FILES FOR ONLY SO LONG BEFORE HIS BRAIN STARTS GETTIN' BUGGY.
G-101
ANYWAY, I HOPE BRUCE WON'T MIND ME GOING OUT IN SEARCH OF CRIME ON MY OWN...
...ESPECIALLY SINCE THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY -- NOT EVEN MERE, ON ONE OF GOTHAM'S MEANEST STREETS.
UP ABOVE THE SIN SO HIGH...
DOUG MOENCH WRITER
DON NEWTON ARTIST
ALFREDO ALCALA INKER
BEN ODA - LETTERER
ADRIENNE ROY- COLORIST
LEW WEIN EDITOR

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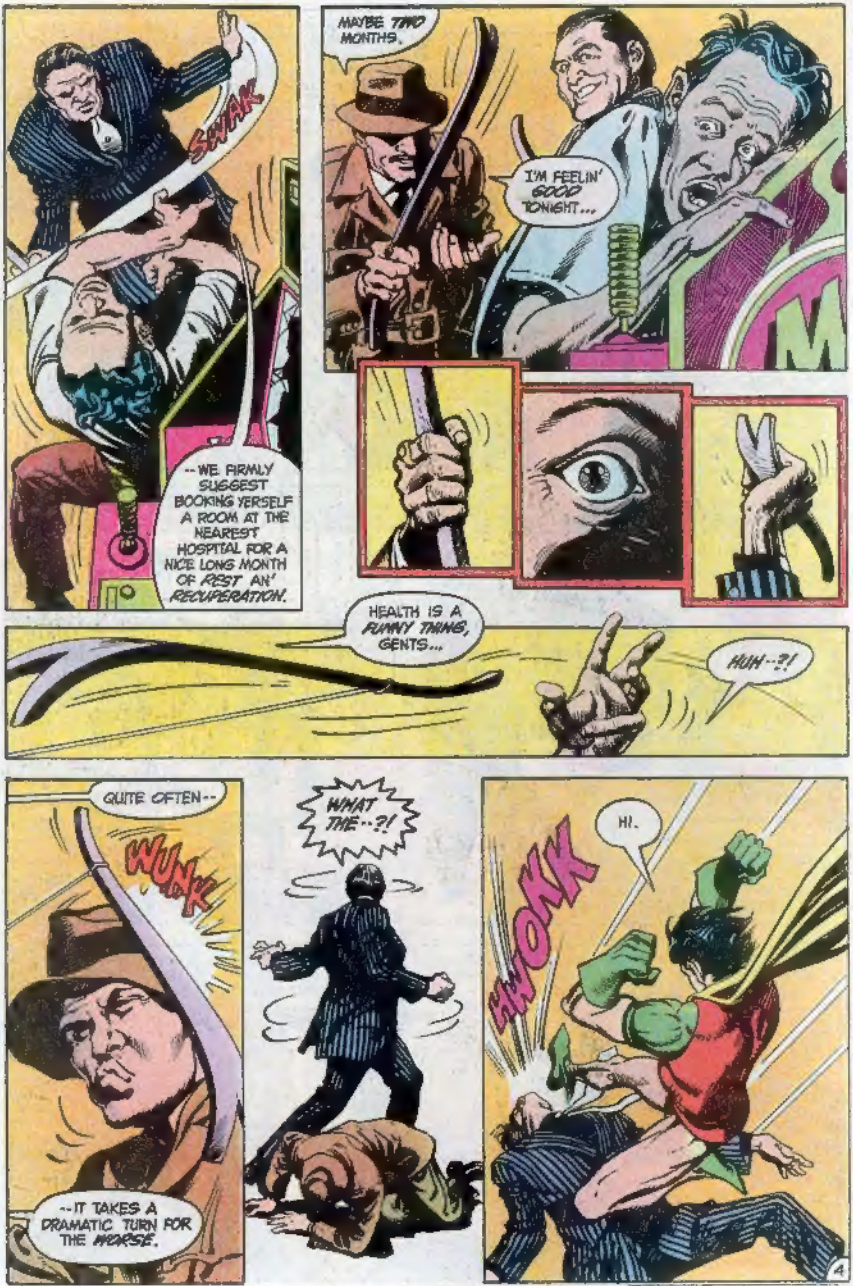
DC Comics Inc. A Warner Communications Company

WELL, HUSH MY BRAIN FOR THINKING TOO SOON...
WALT'S
VIDEO ARCADE
GAMES ¢25¢
OPEN
...SINCE THE ODDS OF AN HONESTLY OBTAINED LIMO OF THAT LENGTH IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD MUST BE ABOUT THE SAME AS A ROCKEFELLER SUBLETTING THE APARTMENT ABOVE THE ARCADE.
BINGO--I CAN SEE THE GLITTER OF THE GLITZY RINGS HOLDING THOSE CROWBARS FROM HERE.
DIS DA JOINT?
YEAH, DIS IS IT.
STREET LEVEL...
...HERE I COME.
KRASH
AND NONE TOO SOON-- BY THE SOUND OF IT.
2

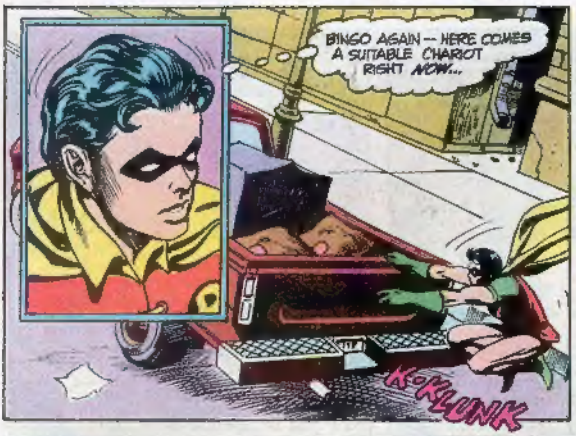
H-HEY! WH-WHAT ARE YOU GUYS D-DOING?!
KEESH
YOU BEEN A BAD BOY FOR ORDERIN' YER AMUSEMENT MACHINES FROM THE WRONG DISTRIBUTOR, PAL-- AND DR. FANG AIN'T AMUSED.
YEAH, VERY STUPID--IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT YOU WAS POLITELY INFORMED THAT DR. FANG HAS RECENTLY ACQUIRED HIS OWN VENDING MACHINE OPERATION.
KASHH
YEAH--DR. FANG LIKES TO SEE A PROFIT ON HIS INVESTMENTS, AND DR. FANG WILL DO JUST ABOUT ANY-THING TO ENSURE SUCH A PROFIT.
SPASHH
MAYBE WE AIN'T SPELLIN' IT OUT IN THE RIGHT LAWNGUAGE FOR YA, PAL, SO IF YOU'LL PERMIT A BRUTAL SLIP INTO FRANKNESS ABOUT THE ENTIRE MATTER...
25¢
TOKENS
RULES
GRONAN SMASH
PEESH
ATA
...DR. FANG IS A VERY VERSATILE MAN, WHO HAS CLEARLY FOCUSED DESIGNS ON JUST ABOUT EVERY MONEY-MAKING OPPORTUNITY GOTHAM'S UNDERWORLD MIGHT PROVIDE...
... AND YOU, MR. ARCADE OWNER, WHETHER YOU REALIZE IT OR NOT, ARE PART OF THAT UNDERWORLD--A SMALL AND MEASLY INSIGNIFICANT PART, TRUE ...
...BUT EVERY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN LIKE DR. FANG RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF DETAILS WHICH ADD UP.
NOW... AFTER YOU CLEAR DIS JUNK OUTTA YOUR ONCE-PROFITABLE ARCADE AND ORDER REPLACEMENT MACHINES FROM DR. FANG'S ESTABLISHMENT--
3


SWIPE
--WE FIRMLY SUGGEST BOOKING YERSELF A ROOM AT THE NEAREST HOSPITAL FOR A NICE LONG MONTH OF REST AN' RECUPERATION.
MAYBE TWO MONTHS.
I'M FEELIN' GOOD TONIGHT...
HEALTH IS A FUNNY THING, GENTS...
HUH--?!
QUITE OFTEN--
WUNK
--IT TAKES A DRAMATIC TURN FOR THE WORSE.
WHAT THE--?!
HI.
HWONK

CONTINUED ON 3 BEF PAGE FOLLOWING

IT'S THAT ROBIN PUNK--THE BATMAN'S STOOGE!
TELL YA WHAT, KID...
FEETIES...
REST ROOM
MADRE DE DIOS!
ANOTHER RAINBOW
I GOT A LITTLE MESSAGE FOR YA TO TAKE TO THE BATMAN--
--AN' HERE IT IS!
KNUFF!
I'LL TAKE THE MESSAGE IF YOU INSIST, FRIEND...
KLANK
... BUT SINCE I ALREADY KNOW WHAT THE BATMAN'S REPLY WILL BE--
KLANK
--HERE IT IS!
CHUDD
BAWWWWW
TILT
5

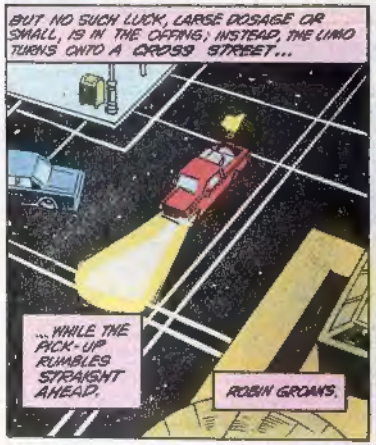
EDDIE! LET'S GET OUTTA HERE-- WE GOT NO MORE TIME FER GAMES--
-- AND THIS KID'S A BUZZSAW!
SPY
BRAM
YEAH... BETTER SPLIT BEFORE THE BATMAN SHOWS UP...
BRAM
AND WITH THAT PARTING SHOT...
...GIVE MY REGARDS TO PAC-MAN.
OPEN
HEY, UNO MOMENTO- WHERE IS THE BATMAN?!
FAR, FAR AWAY, UNFORTUNATELY...
...BECAUSE I JUST LOST THEM...
UNLESS...
6


BINGO AGAIN -- HERE COMES A SUITABLE CHARIOT RIGHT NOW...
K-KLUNK

SHEESH -- THERE GOES ANOTHER SHOCK ABSORBER.
LOUSY STREETS.

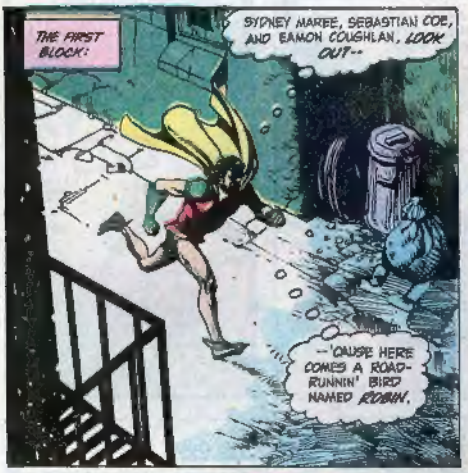
LUCKILY, THE LAST THING THESE GORILLAS W NT RIGHT NOW IS A SPEEDING TICKET...
PRODUCE
... AND WITH A HUGE DOSE OF ADDITIONAL LUCK, THIS PICK-UP MIGHT FOLLOW THEM ALL THE WAY TO THEIR WOUND-LICKING DEN.

HANDING BATMAN THE HIDEOUT OF THIS "DR. FANG" ON A SILVER PLATTER WOULD SURE BE A GREAT COMING-HOME PRESENT...


BUT NO SUCH LUCK, LARGE DOSAGE OR SMALL, IS IN THE OFFING; INSTEAD, THE LIMO TURNS ONTO A CROSS STREET...
...WHILE THE PICK-UP RUMBLES STRAIGHT AHEAD.
ROBIN GROANS.

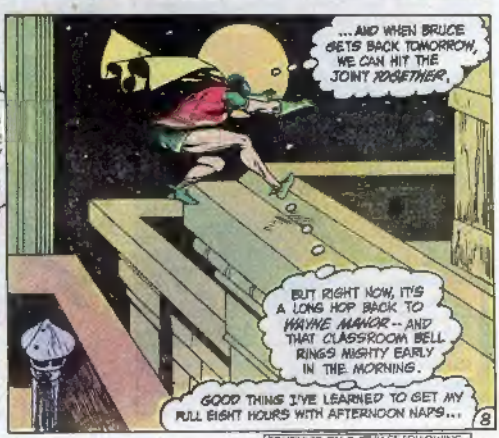
NEVERTHELESS, HE IS NOTHING IF NOT A GAME LAD WITH STRONG LEGS...
K-CHUNK

WELL, WELL, WELL...
WHAT THE POTHOLES TAKETH AWAY, THE PATRON SAINT OF WHEELS SOMETIMES RETURNETH.



THE TWENTY-SIXTH BLOCK:
SO WHAT IF I HIT "THE WALL" FIVE BLOCKS AGO?
GASP
HUFF PUFF
SO WHAT IF ONE LEG FEELS LIKE LEAD AND THE OTHER ONE LIKE RUBBER SPAGHETTI!?
AT LEAST -- THROUGH THE MIRACLE OF GONZO ENDURANCE -- I'VE KEPT THE TAILLIGHTS IN SIGHT... AND THANK GOD FOR THE OCCASIONAL STOP SIGN.

THE THIRTY-SECOND BLOCK:
FNOOOOO--FINALLY.
THE LOUSY LIMO'S STOPPING -- AT 923 RUPERT STREET.
PERSEVERANCE -- AND A DAILY FIVE-MILE RUN -- WINS THE NIGHT...
BUT CRASHING FANG'S CRIB ON MY OWN WOULD BE GILDING THE LILY -- ESPECIALLY SINCE THESE GOONS ARE ARMED.


...AND WHEN BRUCE GETS BACK TOMORROW, WE CAN HIT THE JOINT TOGETHER.
BUT RIGHT NOW, IT'S A LONG HOP BACK TO WAYNE MANOR -- AND THAT CLASSROOM BELL RINGS MIGHTY EARLY IN THE MORNING.
GOOD THING I'VE LEARNED TO GET MY FULL EIGHT HOURS WITH AFTERNOON NAPS...
8

CONTINUED ON 2 3rd PAGE FOLLOWING

BUT EVEN AS ROBIN MOVES OUT OF SIGHT, A BATTERED CAR CRUISES OUT OF THE DARKNESS...
THIS IS THE MEET-PLACE, AWRIGHT...
CRRUNCH
PENTHOUSE AN' LIMO-- YEAH, SURE CRIME DON'T PAY...
IN A BLOODY PIG'S EYE, IT DON'T PAY.
JOHN L. SULLIVAN.
THE MANASSA MAULER-- JACK DEMPSEY.
MUHAMMAD ALI.
BRUCE LEE!

AND DR. FANG HIMSELF -- THE GREATEST LOSS EVER SUFFERED BY THE BOXING ARENA AND THE THEATER WORLD.
TOK TOK TOK
ENTER
MANNY AND TURK HAD A LITTLE TROUBLE WITH ROBIN TONIGHT -- BUT IT'S COOL NOW -- AND THAT COP IS HERE FOR THE MEET.
THANK YOU, WOAD.
KEEP MANNY AND TURK WAITING, THE INCOMPETENT CRETINS...
AND PREPARE SOME DRINKS FOR THE SERGEANT AND MYSELF.
GOOD EVENING - I AM DR. FANG, THE TERROR OF GOTHAM'S UNDERWORLD.
AND YOU MUST BE SGT. BULLOCK, THE POLICEMAN WHO WISHES TO INCREASE HIS FORTUNES BY MOONLIGHTING ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE STREET.
I'M THE COP WHO HATES THE NUTTY FRUITCAKE STANDIN' IN FRONT OF ME --
BUMP
- BUT WHO CAN'T BEAT HIM AND SO WHO IS THUS AN' THEREFORE WILLIN' TO JOIN HIM IN FREAKLAND
I... SEE.
FORTUNATELY, THERE IS NO LAW REQUIRING BUSINESS ASSOCIATES TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.
NOW, SHOULD YOU CARE TO TAKE A SEAT, WE CAN BEGIN OUR MEETING.
10

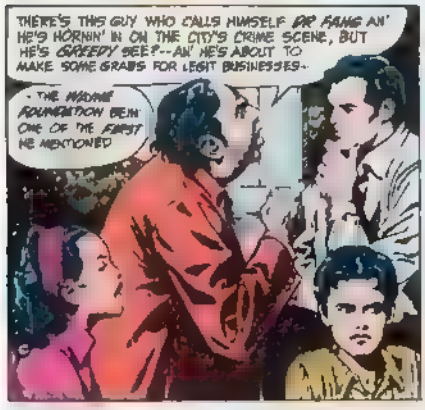
AND, WHEN BULLOCK'S PRESENCE HAS BECOME A SCARE THEME INCORPORATED INTO THE PLUSH DECOR..
--NUMBERS RACKETS AND VENDING MACHINES ARE OF COURSE PROFITABLE ENDEAVORS--
--BUT IT IS TIME I BROADENED MY VENTURES INTO MORE LUCRATIVE AND LEGITIMATE BUSINESS .. BIG BUSINESS!
YEAH?
SO WHADDAYA NEED ME TO DO?
KLAK
DON'T WORRY, SERGEANT.. NOTHING DELICATE
THE DETAILS CONSUME ANOTHER 45 MINUTES, AND THEN
YOUR COOSH, SERGEANT, WILL BE $1000 A WEEK..
BUT ANY ADDITIONAL SPENDING YOU MAY FIND NECESSARY WILL HAVE TO COME FROM THAT SUM,
YEAH, YEAH, I GOTCHA
AND TOMORROW NIGHT SERGEANT WE SHALL DISCUSS TACTICS IN THE TROUBLESOME MATTER OF THE BATMAN AND ROBIN -- TACTICS OF FINALITY
EXITING, BULLOCK ALMOST SWALLOWS HIS STOGIE.
THE NEXT DAY AT WAYNE MANOR, AS JASON TODD STIRS FROM HIS AFTERNOON NAP..
HUH? IT'S ALMOST SIX IN THE EVENING--?
HOME SOON!
BRUCE! YOU'RE ALREADY BACK FROM MONTREAL!
H JAY - I TOOK AN EARLIER FLIGHT SO WE COULD SPEND ALFRED AND HIS DAUGHTER JULIA, WITH DINNER
I'VE GOT STEAKS ON THE GRILL RIGHT NOW...
16

..ISTEN, BRUCE, I'VE GOT SOME BIG NEWS TO--
OF COURSE, AS FAR AS JULIA IS CONCERNED, BRUCE WAYNE NEVER EVEN WENT TO MONTREAL - UNDERSTAND, JAY?
YEAH, SURE -- I'M NO DUMMY -- BUT I'VE GOTTA TELL YA ABOUT WHAT I--
I'LL NEED SOME HELP FIXING THE SALAD, JAY, SO IF YOU COULD--
I'LL FIX IT, I'LL FIX T, BUT JUST LET ME TELL YOU-
THAT MUST BE THEM -- I'LL CHECK ON THE STEAKS WHILE YOU GET THE DOOR.
B-BUT--
WHATEVER IT IS, JAY, IT CAN WAIT TILL LATER, CAN T T -- WHEN WE GO OUT ON PATROL ?
BESIDES, AREN'T YOU ANXIOUS TO MEET ALFRED'S DAUGHTER?
YEAH, SURE -- THE SUSPENSE HAS GOT ME ON PINS AND NEEDLES.
AND SO, DINNER IS CONVENED ON THE TERRACE..
WHAT A DELIGHTFU.. SWITCH SIR YOU SERVING ME
THE LEAST I CAN DO AFTER YOUR TROUBLES IN MONTREAL, ALFRED.
JASON'S FEET, TAPPING NERVOUSLY --
--ABRUPTLY GO DEAD
AFTER DINNER, JULIA, I'LL SHOW YOU YOUR GUEST ROOM -- AND PERHAPS THE REST OF THE MANOR AS WEL..
I.. I'D LIKE THAT, MR WAYNE.
UH, BRUCE, IF I COULD TALK TO YOU?
12

NOT NOW, JAY -- WE HAVEN'T EVEN HAD DESSERT YET
BUT IT'LL JUST TAKE A FEW--

WAYNE - I GOTTA TALK TO YA.
SGT BULLOCK WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
YER GATE OPEN AN' I AIN'T GOT NO TIME TO WASTE, WAYNE

I NEED YER HELP-- ME AN' COMMISH GORDON DO-- THE WHOLE FORCE DOES
THE WHOLE CITY


THERE'S THIS GUY WHO CALLS HIMSELF SIR FANG AN' HE'S HORNIN' IN ON THE CITY'S CRIME SCENE, BUT HE'S GREEDY SEE?-- AN' HE'S ABOUT TO MAKE SOME GRABS FOR LEGIT BUSINESSES--
-THE WAYNE FOUNDATION BEIN ONE OF THE FIRST HE MENTIONED

SO SINCE I BEEN POSIN AS A COP ON THE TAKE TO GET THE GOODS ON THE CREEP ME AN GORDON FIGURED MAYBE YOU AN ME COULD USE YER FOUNDATION AS A GOOD PLACE TO SET UP A STING AN CRACK THIS GUY

REAL WEIRDO FREAK HE IS, LIKE NIGHT OF THE LIVING DRACULA OVER THERE IN A PENTHOUSE CRIB AT 929 RUPERT STREET
JASON TODD SIGHS ONE LONG SYLLABLE WHICH SOUNDS VERY MUCH LIKE, "HMMMMM."

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, KID?
IF THAT STEAK AIN'T SETTIN' WELL IN YER STOMACH I'LL TAKE IT AWAY
YOU ALREADY HAVE BULLOCK

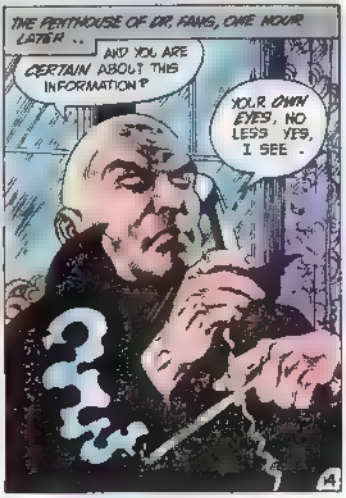
SO I CAN COUNT ON YER COOPERATION, WAYNE?
WELL, I'LL HAVE TO DISCUSS IT WITH COMMISSIONER GORDON,. BUT, YES I THINK YOU CAN COUNT ON ME
GOOD
EVENIN', FOLKS-- ENJOY YER FANCY MEAL.

AND WHEN BULLOCK HAS BANGED HIS LUMBERING WAY THROUGH THE GATES..
I'D HOPED TO SPEND THE EVENING GETTING TO KNOW YOU, JULIA--
BUT I THINK I'D BETTER CONTACT SOME OF MY ASSOCIATES AT THE FOUNDATION.
I UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY, MR WAYNE

AND TOMORROW EVENING, I ASSURE YOU JULIA, YOU'LL LEARN THAT MY NAME IS BRUCE.
JASON? I COULD USE YOUR HELP
NOT AS MUCH AS YOU MIGHT HAVE

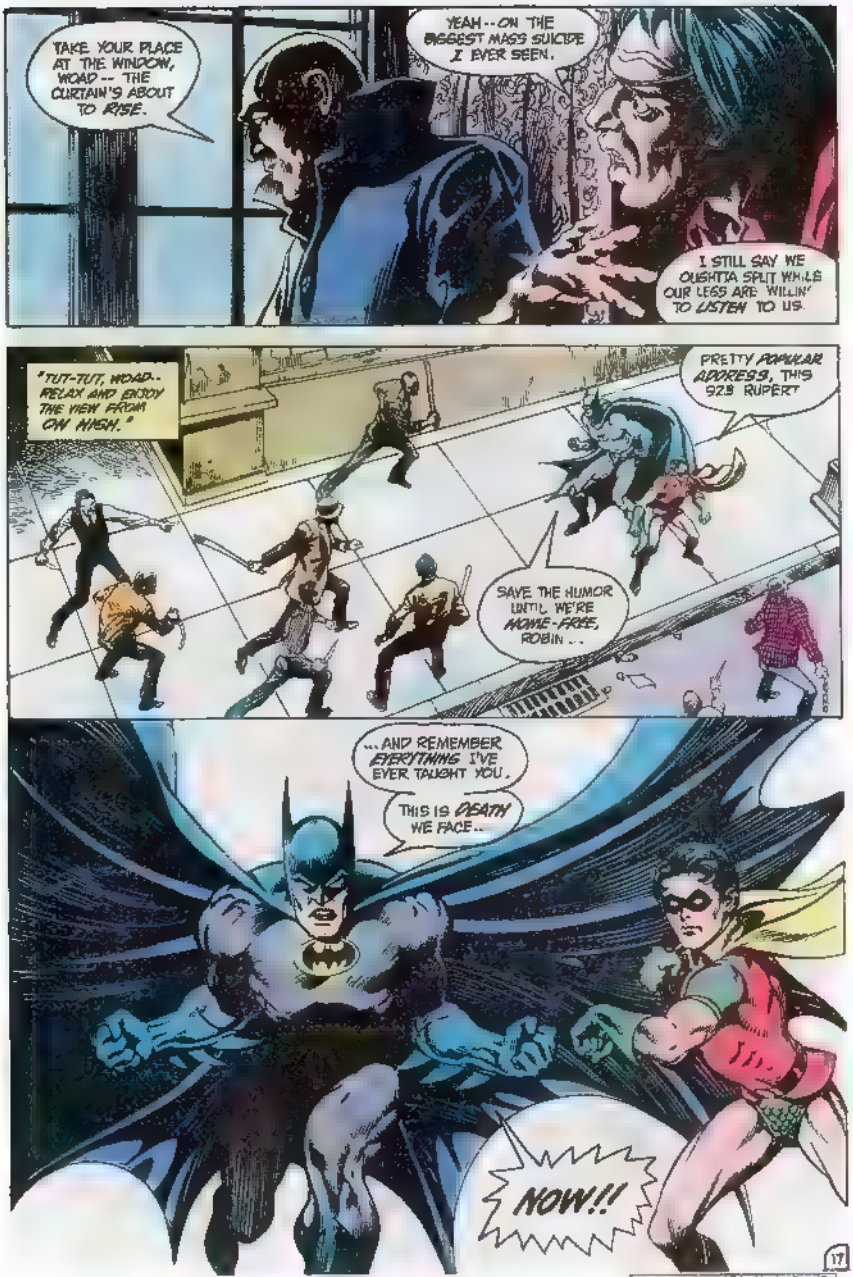
HURRY JAY- WE'VE GOT BUSINESS AT THE TOP OF 923 RUPERT
DO TELL.
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
NOTHING -- NOW

AND WHAT WERE YOU SO ANXIOUS TO TELL ME BEFORE?
OH NOT MUCH JUST THAT SGT BULLOCK IS A REAL SWELL FELLA
REMINDS ME OF A TOOTHACHE


THE PENTHOUSE OF DR. FANG, ONE HOUR LATER ..
AND YOU ARE CERTAIN ABOUT THIS INFORMATION?
YOUR OWN EYES, NO LESS. YES, I SEE .

BATMAN AND ROBIN HAVE JUST BEEN SPOTTED UP THE STREET--APPARENTLY, THEY ARE ON THEIR WAY HERE.
THAT DAMNED COOP!
I KNEW WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TRUSTED HIM-- HE SPILLED EVERYTHING TO THE BATMAN!
WE'VE GOTTA SPLIT-- FAST. WHILE WE CAN.
I THINK NOT, NOAD... INSTEAD, I THINK WE SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A MUCH FINER DRAMA OF VIOLENCE...
...AS WELL AS THE BEST SEATS IN THE HOUSE FROM WHICH TO VIEW IT.
I WANT EVERY AVAILABLE MAN LINING THE STREET AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE...
...BUT WAIT UNTIL BATMAN AND ROBIN ARE DIRECTLY IN THE THICK OF IT--AND NO GUNS.
I DON'T WANT ANY NOISE BRINGING THE POLICE TO THIS LOCATION -- MY LEASE IS DUE FOR RENEWAL AND I LIKE IT HERE.
OH, YES, TEN THOUSAND TO THE MAN WHO NAILS BATMAN...
FIVE TO THE ONE WHO BRINGS DOWN ROBIN.
YOU'RE GOING TOO FAR, BOSS-- THE COPS ALREADY KNOW THIS LOCATION--BULLOCK WAS HERE.
AND HE'LL BE HERE AGAIN, NOAD --TONIGHT-- FOR ONE LAST VISIT
NONE OF THE ADJACENT BUILDINGS IS TALL OR NEAR ENOUGH..
WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE OUR ENTRANCE AT STREET LEVEL.
READY, ROBIN?
I'M SO READY, I'VE GOT A CASE OF DÉJÀ VU.

SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU, SON?
IF YOU'VE GOT ANYTHING TO SAY, JUST--
FREEZE, ROBIN
WE'VE BEEN MADE
HOW MANY DO YOU SEE?
TOO MANY, BATMAN
"THERE'LL BE AT LEAST ONE IN EACH DOORWAY ACROSS THE STREET PROBABLY ON THIS SIDE OF THE STREET TOO...
"WE'RE COMING THROUGH THE FENCE UP AHEAD...
"AND NOW THE PARKED CARS ARE OPENING UP...
"ALL IN ALL I MAKE ABOUT TWENTY LIKING THE WAY TO THE PENTHOUSE."
GOOD ENOUGH, ROBIN -- BUT THAT DOESN'T COUNT THE ONES BEHIND US.
HUH--?!
OBOY, AND THIS SURE AIN'T NO VIDEO GAME
16


TAKE YOUR PLACE AT THE WINDOW, WOAD -- THE CURTAIN'S ABOUT TO RISE.
YEAH--ON THE BIGGEST MASS SUICIDE I EVER SEEN.
I STILL SAY WE OUGHTTA SPLIT WHILE OUR LEGS ARE WILLIN' TO LISTEN TO US.
"TUT-TUT, WOAD.. RELAX AND ENJOY THE VIEW FROM ON HIGH."
PRETTY POPULAR ADDRESS, THIS 923 RUPERT
SAVE THE HUMOR UNTIL WE'RE HOME-FREE, ROBIN...
...AND REMEMBER EVERYTHING I'VE EVER TAUGHT YOU.
THIS IS DEATH WE FACE..
NOW!!

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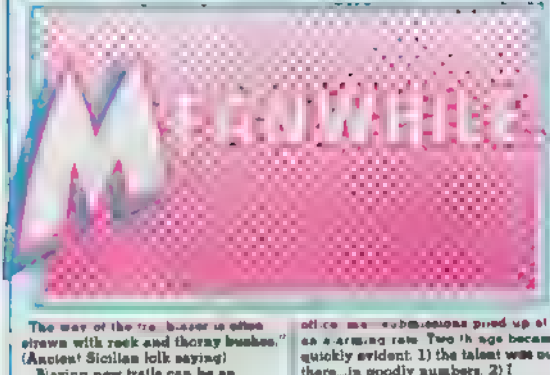


The way of the pro-boxer is often strewn with rock and thorny bushes." (Ancient Sicilian folk saying)

Blazing new trails can be an exhilarating adventure, but even the most cautious adventurer may find himself bruised and bleeding at journey's end. Such thoughts never entered our minds when we embarked on our oft-heralded DC talent search two years ago. Armed with the advice of my forebears and a confidence born of having spent some time in my 30-odd year career trying to develop new talent on a small scale, I ventured forth into the countryside determined to find the new talent that would be tomorrow's creative force in the comic book industry.

Our search was successful. I'm glad we did it, but I gotta tell you, I was in no way prepared for the events that brought us to where we are now and if I had it to do over again, I'd need to find a new source of time and energy. It's been fun but it's been tough!

In 1981, I found myself in a decision-making capacity at DC Comics. It became clear to me that if DC (and the rest of the comic publishers, for that matter) was to continue publishing new material for an expanding market, we would have to find a way to enlarge the talent pool to accommodate the growth of new kinds of comics and new ideas, characters, and titles. Some very talented people had left comics for greener pastures. Others started doing less work in order to do it better to meet the demands of the rapidly emerging direct sale market. Still others left the industry because they could not meet those demands. And the influx of new talent wasn't sufficient to meet current schedule requirements, much less future ones.

So we embarked on our Talent Search...amid scoffing from some quarters and a watchful eye from all. (It's significant to note that most of the scoffers have since announced some form of talent search themselves!)

On the convention trail during 1982, I looked at portfolios and read script submissions till my eyes bled...or felt like they did. Back at the office, new submissions piled up at an alarming rate. Two things became quickly evident: 1) the talent was out there...in goodly numbers. 2) I couldn't handle the volume of work my other duties demanded and still conduct the talent search. What to do? We decided that a position should be created and a person hired to devote all his attention to the task of identifying, locating, and training new talent. The position: Talent Coordinator. And to fill it, old friend Sal Amendola. Sal was uniquely qualified for the job, having worked in every aspect of comic production and having spent a considerable amount of time in recent years teaching at **The School of Visual Arts** in New York City and **Joe Kubert's School of Cartoon Art** in Dover, New Jersey. When we announced Sal's arrival on the scene, mail submissions seemed to double, and during the 1983 convention swing we noticed that in addition to looking at many new portfolios, we found ourselves looking at updated portfolios of people whose work we had looked at in 1982. They came back again to show us that they had improved.

Fair questions: What has this all accomplished and where do we go from here? Quite a bit and as far as we can see!

1) The **New Talent Showcase** title was created to provide a vehicle to showcase the talents of some we feel are ready to our comic readers. A new, expanded version of this book will begin publication sometime in 1984.

2) Most, if not all, of the new names you'll find in the credits of DC Comics are products of the new talent program. We expect to add more new names.

3) Sal relentlessly prods our less adventuresome editors to take a chance with one of the artists or writers on his "ready" list (which we intend to turn into an actual catalogue). This list is comprised of people we feel need professional experience and feedback to take the next step in their development. The list adds considerably to our available talent pool.

4) Some of the writers and artists presented in the aforementioned **New Talent Showcase** turned pro before their new talent work was published (delays in scheduling were caused by a series of editorial assignment shifts) and often their pro assignments came from other publishers. I'm not always happy with that happening, but fair is fair...and it does expand the industry talent pool. It'll all shake out in the end.

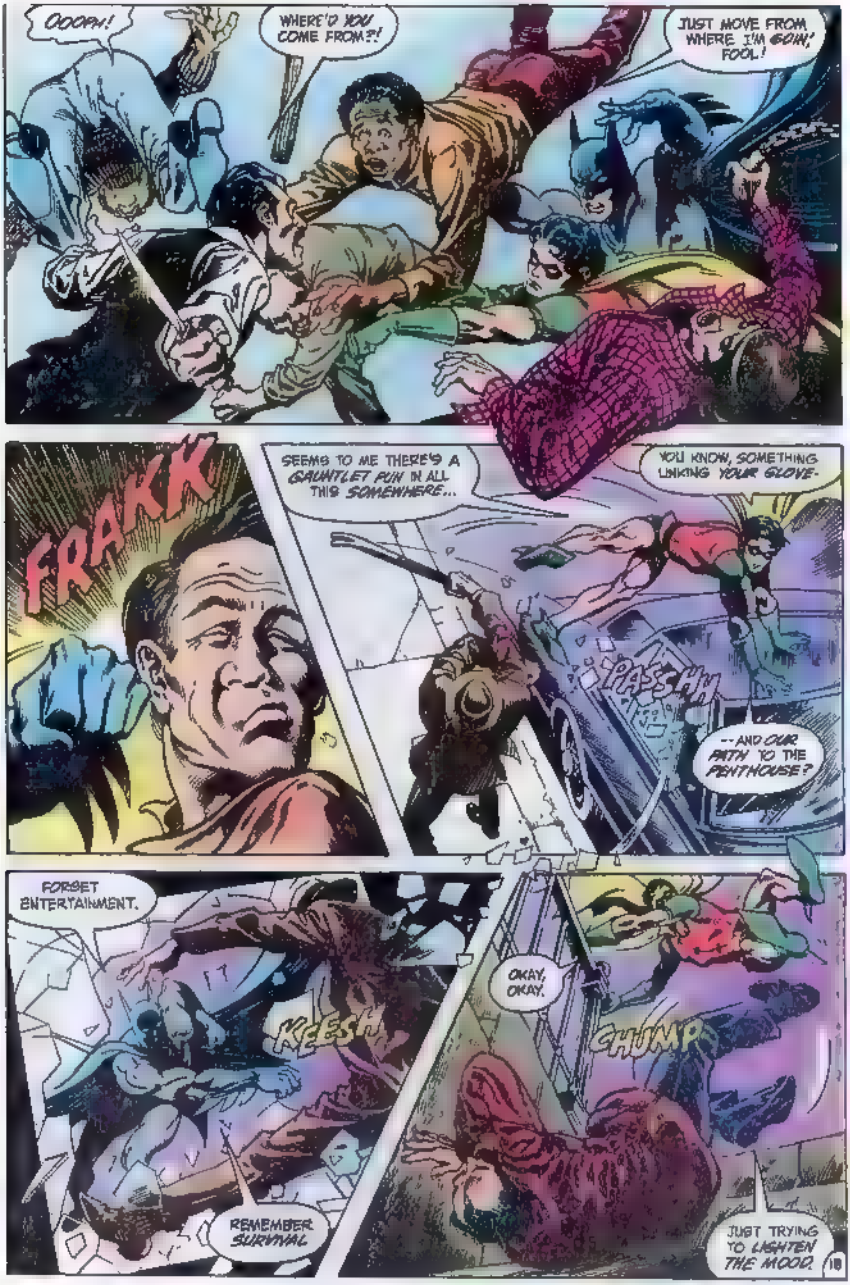
Ah, the future! We are now requesting that most submissions cease. We will not conduct open searches at conventions in 1984. This is not because the new talent program is ended but because we must take the next step to bring the program to fruition. We call it phase II. To wit: All work that has been submitted to us will be returned with some evaluation or response. In some cases we will request updated samples for our in-house catalogue. Others will be informed that they are one of the fifty or so who we feel show the most promise. These fifty or so will be invited to attend seminars conducted by Sal Amendola and/or myself and others during the summer of 1984. The sites of these seminars will be determined by the demographics of the people chosen. Wherever possible, the seminars will be conducted in conjunction with or adjunct to comic conventions. Chicago and San Diego look like good bets. We are now making up that list and those on it will be informed before summer. Please don't call us...we'll call for we're sure you will all the pertinent details as soon as they are determined. For those of you not on that list, DC Comics is currently preparing a sort of "How To..." book that may be helpful in improving your skills and providing the kind of information our talks with some of you have indicated would be most helpful. Sal Amendola and Nick Cuti will co-edit this book and more details will follow.

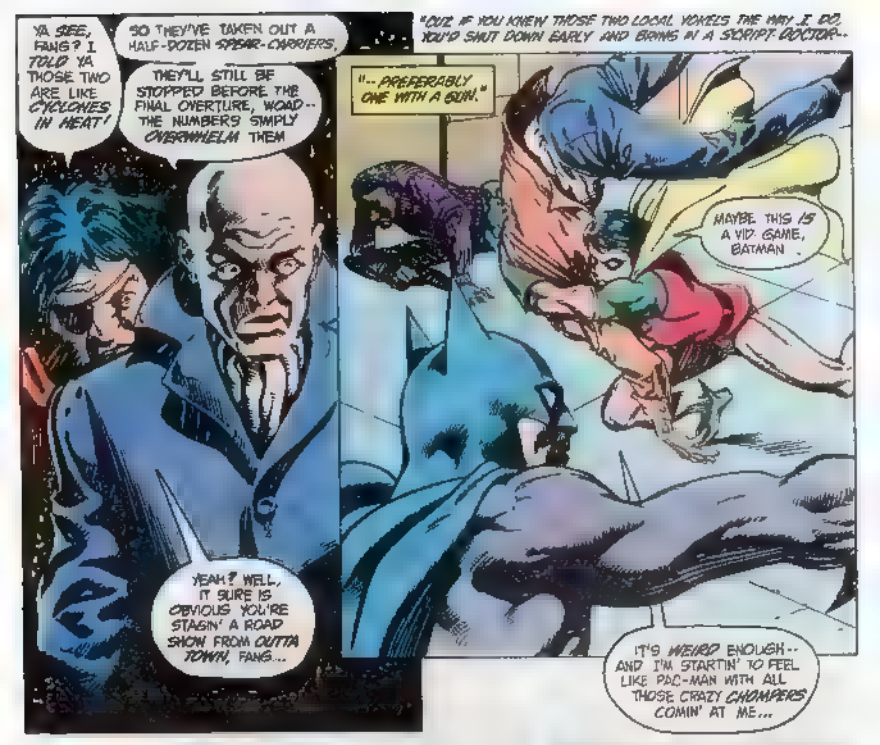
To all who submitted samples or came to talk to us at conventions, thanks for letting us look at your material. We know how much courage that often takes. We enjoyed talking with you and look forward to doing so again. We apologize to those who had to wait long periods of time for a response from us to their submissions. We did not anticipate the volume of submissions that were made and we were and are clearly understaffed. Moving our offices in November of 1982 didn't help, but...Anyway, thanks a bunch for your participation, cooperation, and understanding when glitches developed. I appreciate.

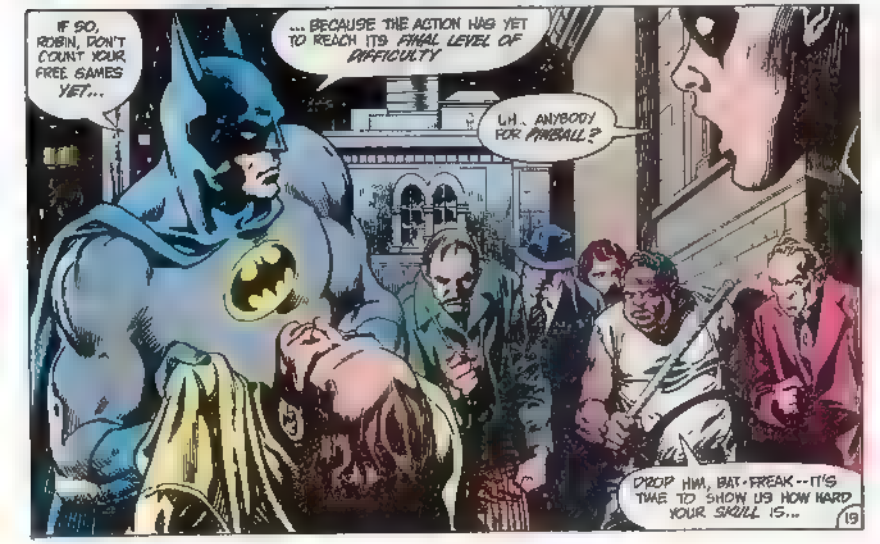
And by the way, I made up that "ancient Sicilian folk saying" at the beginning of this column. It just seemed like a better way to start than: About our talent search.

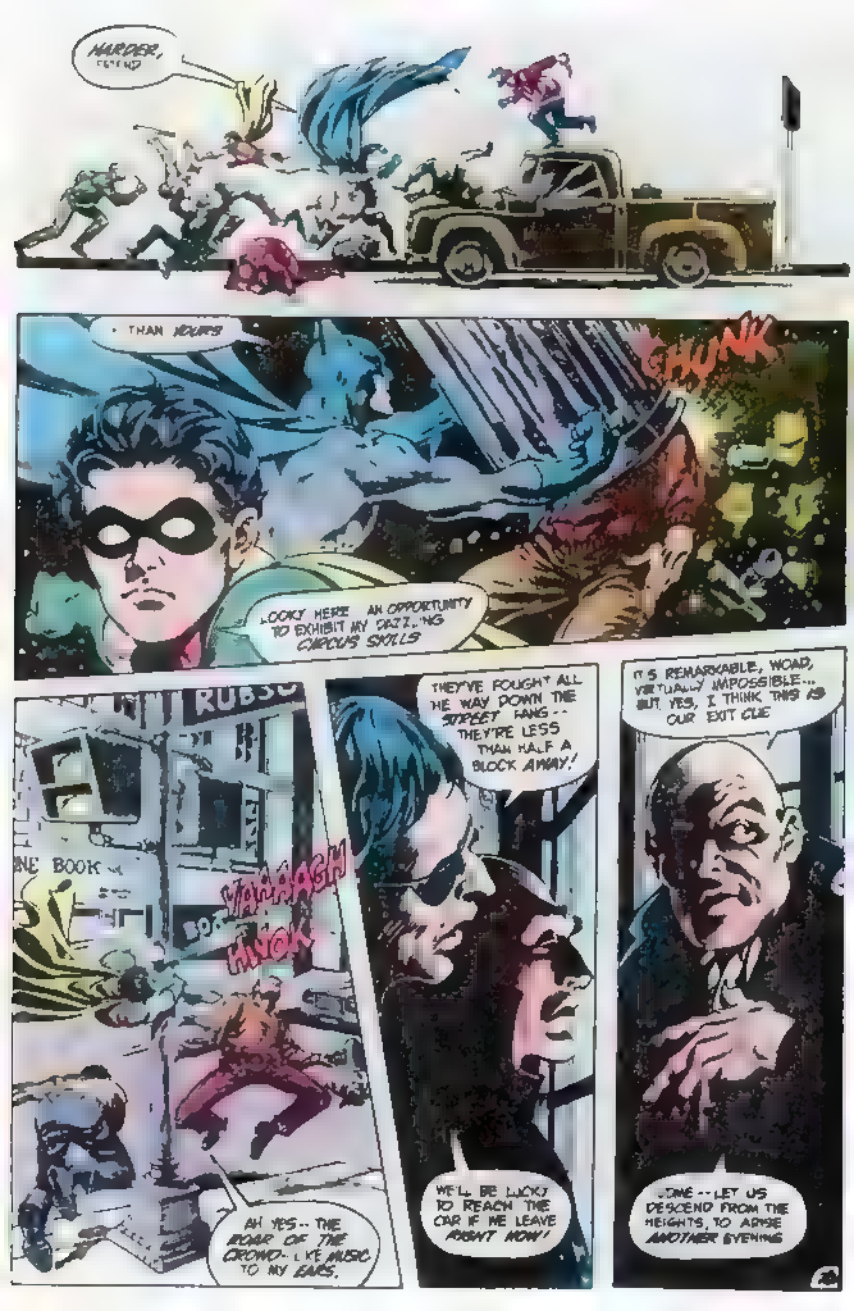
Thank you and good afternoon.

Dick


OOOPH!
WHERE'D YOU COME FROM?!
JUST MOVE FROM WHERE I'M GOIN', FOOL!
FRAKK
SEEMS TO ME THERE'S A GAUNTLET RUN IN ALL THIS SOMEWHERE...
YOU KNOW, SOMETHING LINKING YOUR GLOVE-
PASS HM
--AND OUR PATH TO THE PENTHOUSE?
FORGET ENTERTAINMENT.
KEESH
REMEMBER SURVIVAL
OKAY, OKAY.
CHUMP
JUST TRYING TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD.
10


YA SEE, FANG? I TOLD YA THOSE TWO ARE LIKE CYCLONES IN HEAT!
SO THEY'VE TAKEN OUT A HALF-DOZEN SPEAR-CARRIERS, THEY'LL STILL BE STOPPED BEFORE THE FINAL OVERTURE, WOAD-- THE NUMBERS SIMPLY OVERWHELM THEM
YEAH? WELL, IT SURE IS OBVIOUS YOU'RE STAGIN' A ROAD SHOW FROM OUTTA TOWN, FANG...
"BUT IF YOU KNEW THOSE TWO LOCAL YOKELS THE WAY I DO, YOU'D SHUT DOWN EARLY AND BRING IN A SCRIPT DOCTOR--
"-- PREFERABLY ONE WITH A GUN."
MAYBE THIS IS A VID GAME, BATMAN
IT'S WEIRD ENOUGH-- AND I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL LIKE PAC-MAN WITH ALL THOSE CRAZY CHOMPERS COMIN' AT ME...


IF SO, ROBIN, DON'T COUNT YOUR FREE GAMES YET...
... BECAUSE THE ACTION HAS YET TO REACH ITS FINAL LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY
UH... ANYBODY FOR PINBALL?
DROP HIM, BAT-FREAK-- IT'S TIME TO SHOW US HOW HARD YOUR SKULL IS...


HARDER, FRIEND!
THAN HOURS
CHUNK
LOOKY HERE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXHIBIT MY DAZZLING CIRCUS SKILLS
RUBSO
NE BOOK
YAHHAGH
HNOK
AH YES-- THE ROAR OF THE CROWD-- LIKE MUSIC TO MY EARS.
THEY'VE FOUGHT ALL THE WAY DOWN THE STREET HANG-- THEY'RE LESS THAN HALF A BLOCK AWAY!
WE'LL BE LUCKY TO REACH THE CAR IF WE LEAVE RIGHT NOW!
IT'S REMARKABLE, WOAD, VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE... BUT YES, I THINK THIS IS OUR EXIT CUE
JUNE -- LET US DESCEND FROM THE HEIGHTS, TO ADMIRE ANOTHER EVENING

ROBIN! WHERE ARE YOU GOING-?!
THE LIMO, BATMAN!
QUICKLY, NOAH-- START THE ENGINE!
HEY, CHROMEDOME!
EH--?
THAT MUST BE FANG HIMSELF!
NEED A HEAD-SHAVE?
BUT--
WHAT TH--?!
SO FAST... AND.. STRONG..
AND Y-YOU'VE... YOU'VE REALLY GOT FANGS!
21
TURN OVER FOR 2ST PAGE FOLLOWING

GOOD LORD! HE'S GOT ROBIN THROTTLED--
--AND HE'S ACTUALLY GOING TO BITE HIM!
CHUD
SWUKT
DR. FANG REELS BACK, THE STING STOLEN FROM HIS BITE--
--AND AS ROBIN FALLS FREE...
LET'S GO, WOAD-- FAST!
VRAOWW
ROBIN! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
WELL, I WAS A LITTLE SPOOKED, BATMAN...
...BUT NOW I'M JUST DISGUSTED.
WE HAD THE CHANCE TO RACK UP A PERFECT SCORE--AND I BLEW IT ON THE BIG CHOMPER HIMSELF.

AT LEAST THERE'S A LITTLE CONSOLATION PRIZE EMBEDDED IN YOUR BATARANG...
I SHOULD HAVE DEFANGED THE CREEP MYSELF--WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE LAST NIGHT.
HEY--WHAT'S THE DEAL? I SHOW UP FOR ANOTHER MEET WITH FANG AN' I GOTTA DRIVE THROUGH AN OBSTACLE COURSE OF THUGS.
WHAT?! WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU TALKING ABOU--
LOOK AT IT THIS WAY, BULLOCK--YOU'RE JUST IN TIME TO CLEAN THE STREET.
ROBIN, I THINK YOU'D BETTER EXPLAIN WHAT YOU JUST SAID...
NOW WE GOTTA GO UNDERGROUND FOR REAL, BOSS--'CUZ WE SURE CAN'T GO BACK TO THAT PENTHOUSE.
SO--WHERE TO?
A QUESTION OF BOTH EGREGIOUS AND EXECRABLE STUPIDITY, WOAD...
"TO THE DENTIST, OF COURSE."
CLEAN THE STREET, HE SEZ.
GONNA NEED A WHOLE FLEET OF PADDY WAGONS TO MOP UP THIS ASPHALT.
WELL?
WELL...IF YOU'RE FINALLY WILLING TO LISTEN...
COME ON--AND I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT AT THE BATCAVE.
IN THE NEXT DETECTIVE: DOWN BELOW

DC Comics Inc.
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New York, NY 10103

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Dear Len:

It seems Doug Moench is trying to inject something new into the Batman books: Reality!

Think of it: How many times have we seen a comic book villain getting off the hook due to lack of evidence or failure of the jury to believe the D.A.? Other than this Poison Ivy story, none that I can think of offhand.

Moving ahead, I think there's a great storm brewing within the Batman books. Case in point: Jason wants to be the Batman's new partner. Problem is, Jason can't be Robin because Dick Grayson is already Robin. So Jason dons a different costume and calls himself Ishmael—which means, by the way, an outcast, or one at war with society. An apparently perfect name for the Batman's new partner. But when the Batman gets into trouble, who does he call for? Robin! Now, we knew that he was actually calling for Jason, but after so many years with Dick Grayson at his side, instinct prevails. Of course, this leaves both the Batman and Ishmael in a dilemma. There are three solutions to the problem: 1) Keep Jason as Batman's partner, but as Ishmael; 2) Give the Robin name and costume to Jason; and 3) Forget about Jason ever becoming the Batman's new partner.

One of these solutions will become reality; of that I'm certain.

Kevin T. Brown
7848F W. Lawrence Ave.
Norridge, IL 60656

And right you were, Kevin, with speculation #2—a choice with which we hope the majority of our readers are pleased. Doug, Dan, Gene, Len, Marv, Dick, Jenette, and everyone else here at DC insisted that faithfulness to the books in question—BATMAN, DETECTIVE, and TEEN TITANS—be paramount in governing our decision. Since Dick Grayson has long been growing out of the Batman's shadow and into his own independent role as leader of the Titans, we felt it was only logical that the boots of any new heroic persona should be filled by Dick. And, try as we did, we just couldn't force our ears to accept the sound or legitimacy of anything other than the classic twain "Batman and Robin." Batman and Bluejay, for example, just wouldn't cut it—nor would Batman and Domino or Batman and Nightshade or any of the other half a zillion possibilities batted around. Indeed, the two recent scenes in which Batman and Jason trade suggested names back and forth was Doug's recreation of a meeting with Len at the DC offices (in which Marv Wolfman and Mike Barr cheerfully blistered); ergo, the conclusion reached at meeting's end was eventually shared by Batman and Jason themselves, with a little prodding from Dick Grayson: Anything other than "Batman and Robin" would not only violate some 45 years of habit and history...it just wouldn't fly. [And how's that for injecting some "reality" into the series?]

Finally, it should be noted that it was Gerry Conway who initially proposed the notion of a "new Robin," before Gerry left the series to more fully concentrate on FIRESTORM, JLA, ATARI FORCE, and various other new projects.

And so...Batman and Robin are no more; long live Batman and Robin!

*****

Dear Len and Doug:

I was so pleased with the stunning effectiveness of Walt Simonson's cover on BATMAN #366 that I almost didn't notice it lacked the Batman logo on the top.

The Joker was recognizable as the same person who has appeared over the years, yet he also seemed to be a fresh new villain adding new vitality to the book. Doug's version reminds me of the deadly Joker portrayed by Steve Englehart some years ago. The Batman himself also seems to be the same person who has appeared in so many comics, but Doug has also breathed new life into this immortal character, again reminding me of the Englehart version as well as the Denny O'Neil one.

While the different artists on BATMAN and DETECTIVE sort of break the continuity, I am undecided as to whom would be the best choice for doing both books. I'm equally happy with the Newton and Colan versions. (Alfredo Alcala's inks on this issue were great, as usual.)

Paul Green
1022 SW Stark #404
Portland, OR 97205

We agree, of course, that there are obvious artistic differences between the work of Don Newton and Gene Colan, but we feel that not only does the employment of a single writer compensate for these differences—but that the remaining visual variety is the spice of the Batman's life.

Now for some further comments on our recent jaunt into Joker-Land...

*****

Dear Len and Nicola,

It's getting very difficult to decide whether BATMAN or DETECTIVE should receive a general letter about the Darknight Detective's recent exploits. The current stories shift back and forth so much, there's no way to choose one title over the other. Look at the Joker trilogy. Two of the parts were in BATMAN, but the DETECTIVE chapter linked the two. See what I mean?

Anyway, the Joker saga was virtually the sort of stuff I expect from that crafty clown, and writer Moench already seems to have a fairly good grasp of the character. One might quibble with Joker-Land; a terror park, yes—but an amusement park...?

It was also an interesting touch to have the Joker's vicious antics unexpectedly unite the government and rebel forces. Too bad it couldn't continue, resulting in a peaceful solution to all disagreements.

Jef Peckham
503 Marlatt Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506

Amen, Jef.

As for your earlier point, let us not forget that the Joker's "amusement" is usually everyone else's terror.

*****

Dear Editor:

Just finished reading BATMAN #365 and want to say it's great. One look at the first page and you could tell the artwork would be terrific throughout. The story was refreshingly different, placing the Batman in a new setting for a change.

But I noticed a mistake on page 9. When Vicki Vale speaks to the German bettling with his Polaroid, he answers: "No sprachen sie Englisch." Literally translated, this means "You no speak English." Since you obviously meant for him to say, "I don't speak English," the correct wording would be "Ich spreche nicht Englisch." As you probably infer, I'm German and I just wanted to let you know about a minor mistake. Your comics, however, are still great. Keep up the good work!

Carmen Espinosa
50 N. Doggett Dr.
Graham, NC 27253

Oops...right you are, Carmen, proving that the extent of Doug's German was gleaned from repeated viewings of Stalag 17. We apologize.

But...your name sure doesn't sound

German—while Scottish Doug's most emphatically does. (A little Twilight Zone music, please...and sweeey we go!)

*****

Dear Len,

Bravo! My heartiest thanks to whomever decided to use the logo-less cover on the December BATMAN. Walt Simonson provided an absolute corker far too good to waste merely because the central figures occupied the space normally reserved for the logo.

The conclusion to the Joker trilogy was accomplished with great skill by Doug, Don, and Alfredo. The buildup to the final showdown between the Batman and the Joker was suspenseful and offered an opportunity for Doug to dispense some insight on the current problems in Central America. Batman's conversation with Ticani was intelligently written, as were the later scenes with Ticani and General Diaz.

But of course the high point of this issue was presented on page 21—a memorable scene superbly illustrated by Don and Alfredo. Batman's reaction to seeing Jason in Robin's costume was in keeping with his recent mood, and I look forward to the moment when Dick Grayson officially passes on the costume to Jason. That should be an emotional scene, indeed!

The various developments concerning Bullock and Alfred promise a very interesting few months ahead. Alfred has a daughter, eh? Now, I wonder just *whom* the mother might have been... Does the name Marie ring any bells?

Dale Coe
41, Whitecross Road
Werrington
Cheshire, WA5 1LR England

Well's Batman/Joker cover was privately commissioned at a recent comics convention, Dale. Len saw it, immediately went bonkers, asked Walt if he could purchase the cover rights, and then asked Doug to "do up a Joker story featuring a Central American pyramid." Walt and Doug both said sure—and presto: Instant cover. (Ain't these glimpses behind the scenes grand?)

*****

Dear Len,

What in the world is Dick Grayson going to do when he sees Vicki Vale's photos of Jason in the Robin costume? Will Batman ever be able to explain that it wasn't his idea, but a crazy caprice born of his new ward's struggle to be accepted by his mentor? Is it possible that Jason will also want to become one of the Outsiders?

These are the questions BATMAN #366 brings to mind. Also: Never before have I seen a writer delve so deeply into the Joker's madness. It is this facet of the white-faced criminal that makes him so dangerous, and Doug Moench should be credited for portraying this villain more terrifyingly than ever. I remember how good Don Newton's pencils were on SHAZAM! and they are equally as good here, but with the entire tone, of course, suitably darkened. Perhaps here Mr. Alcala deserves no little credit for emphasizing the necessary moodiness. Without it, a "superstitious, cowardly criminal" might not have "fear struck in his heart." Everyone currently working on this book should accept his or her due praise, simply for remembering.

And the Simonson cover was sensational!

Adam Burchess
1316 Morreene Rd.
Apt. 24-C
Durham, NC 27705

*****

Dear Doug and Len,

A few points about BATMAN #366...

First, a very grateful tip of the hat to writer Doug Moench (how do you pronounce that?) for the Batman's characterization. My one complaint about the way the Batman has been handled in the last few years (and it is a major complaint) is that he has been dangerously psychotic and thus a real disappointment to this reader. Doug seems to avoid this as much as possible without ignoring what has gone before. I wasn't crazy about his even more psychotic Moon Knight, but I really like Doug's Batman.

Speaking of crazy...I've heard some real nice things in the comics shop here about the way Doug is handling lunatic Joker. I especially enjoyed page 18, panel 2.

Glad to see Robin finally used on an equal footing with the Batman himself, but a little disappointed when I found out it wasn't Dick Grayson. It was a real nice twist, though.

The coloring has been really great lately, and the Newton art is always terrific—especially now, on the new higher quality paper.

Phill Deckert
Hudson, IN

Doug rhymes with "hug" and Moench rhymes with "bench." (Romance in the park, anyone?) And while we're at it, we might as well hit that other frequently mispronounced appellation: Wein rhymes with "scheme," "scene," "clean," and "lean." (Make of that what you will...)

And now...outta room, see the imp of Typeset? Okay, next time, then...

For now, don't forget DETECTIVE COMICS in two weeks! (It's called "Down Below" and it's strange and poignant and exciting and Green Arrow's probably in the back, to boot!)

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